

Attacks and Prohibitions Against Ahmadis Celebrating the Eid-ul-Adha Festival in Pakistan

2024



A Special Human Rights Report

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Ahmadis and Eid-ul-Adha: Navigating Restrictions and Challenges in Pakistan

Eid-ul-Adha, also known as the Festival of Sacrifice, is one of the most significant Islamic holidays. It commemorates the willingness of Prophet Abraham to sacrifice his son as an act of obedience to God. Muslims around the world celebrate this festival by sacrificing animals such as goats, sheep, and cows. For Ahmadis in Pakistan, performing this ritual has become increasingly perilous due to legal and social constraints.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Ahmadis faced sporadic violence and legal challenges whenever they attempted to perform the Eid sacrifice. The state machinery, often influenced by extremist elements, imposed various restrictions, and there were instances where police intervened to prevent Ahmadis from carrying out the ritual. In the 2000s, the persecution became more structured. Local authorities, under pressure from extremist groups, would often confiscate sacrificial animals from Ahmadi households. The police, instead of protecting the community, frequently acted against them, citing vague threats to public order.

Since 2010 anti-Ahmadi sentiment has grown stronger with the rise of extremist political parties like the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP). Public and violent opposition to Ahmadis performing the Eid sacrifice has also become more organised, particularly so over the past five or six years.

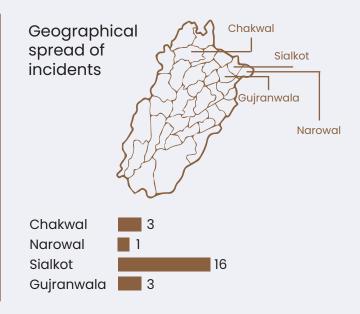
During the Eid-ul-Adha festivities last year, clerics, especially from the TLP, sought to prevent Ahmadis from performing the traditional sacrifice. Ignoring constitutional protections, Punjab authorities issued directives to restrict Ahmadi religious activities. On 23 June 2023, the Punjab Home Department instructed that only Muslims be allowed to perform Qurbani, violating Article 20(a) of the Constitution.

This led to numerous police actions against Ahmadis. On 29 June, three Ahmadis in District Nankana Sahib were arrested for requesting butchers to slaughter their animals. The next day, police in District Toba Tek Singh arrested four Ahmadis for performing Qurbani, filing FIRs under PPC 298-C. Similar arrests occurred in Faisalabad on 1 July, following complaints from the TLP clerics. Anti-Ahmadi activists circulated complaint templates and urged the public to report Ahmadi religious practices, resulting in police raids and confiscation of sacrificial animals. Despite local support for Ahmadis, bar associations and clerical groups across Pakistan actively worked to deny Ahmadis their religious rights.





Ahmadis detained under the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance.



1200

Criminal cases registered under 298-C against 18 Ahmadis.

36

Ahmadis detained or arrested in total.

3

Instances of Ahmadis being prevented from offering the Eid prayer.

150

People attacked the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir.



Human Rights Violations Against Ahmadis During Eid-ul-Adha 2024

Summary

During the Eid-ul-Adha festivities of 2024, the Ahmadiyya Community in Pakistan faced severe human rights violations. Across various districts, members of the community were targeted, detained, and harassed for attempting to perform their religious rites. As of now, a total of 36 Ahmadis have been arrested or detained. In Gujranwala alone, eight Ahmadis were detained, with three cases registered against four individuals, and two others held without any formal charges. Sargodha and Toba Tek Singh also witnessed the arrests of Ahmadis under different cases. In Rahim Yar Khan, a case was registered without any arrests being made.

Sheikhupura saw the detention of five Ahmadis across four cases, although they were later released by the magistrate's order. In Sialkot, 17 Ahmadis were arrested after police raids on Ahmadi homes, while Narowal reported the detention of one Ahmadi. Karachi and Umerkot also saw the arrest and subsequent release of Ahmadis. These incidents highlight a systematic crackdown on the religious freedoms of the Ahmadiyya Community, with local authorities often succumbing to pressure from extremist factions. Similar incidents of arrests and property confiscations were reported in Gujranwala, Lahore, and Khushab, further illustrating the widespread nature of these violations.

Additionally, in Faisalabad, extremists from the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan reported Ahmadi sacrifices to the police, leading to arrests and confiscation of sacrificial meat. Similar incidents occurred in Karachi, where banners were displayed to discourage Ahmadi sacrifices, and several community members were detained.

In other examples of the religious practice of Ahmadis being restricted during the Eid festivities, in Chak Chatha, Dahranwala, and Pir Kot Sani in Hafizabad, police barred Ahmadis from their worship places, forcing them to offer Eid prayers at alternative locations. In Gujranwala, authorities mandated inconvenient prayer times, resulting in scattered and disrupted prayers.



03Spotlights

10 May, Jehlum

Members of the Ahmadiyya Community in Jehlum faced severe threats from extremists ahead of Eid-ul-Adha. During a rally organised by the local chapter of the Tahreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) ostensibly to show solidarity with Palestine, the group's leaders instead directed their attention towards the Ahmadiyya place of worship, Bait-ul-Zikr, and issued violent threats. Asim Ashfaq Rizvi, a prominent TLP leader, declared that any Ahmadi who attempted the ritual sacrifice on Eid-ul-Adha would be hanged. Rizvi also boasted about past attacks on Ahmadiyya worship sites and graves.

At the rally, some participants brandished swords, further heightening tensions. Rizvi issued a month-long warning to local Ahmadis, warning them against sacrificing animals on Eid-ul-Adha. Additionally, he warned the district administration and police officers, including the deputy commissioner, SHOs, and DSPs, against offering protection to the Ahmadis.



10 June, Chakwal

In the lead-up to Eid-ul-Adha 2024, the district administration of Chakwal, Pakistan, detained three prominent members of the Ahmadiyya Community to prevent them from performing the ritual animal sacrifice. On 10 June, Chakwal's Deputy Commissioner Quratul Ain Malik issued orders for the one-month detention of these individuals under Section 3 of the Maintenance of Public Order Act 1960, citing potential threats to law and order as per reports from the district police officer. These men, hailing from Dulmial village—site of a violent mob attack on an Ahmadi worship place in December 2016—were subsequently arrested and transferred to Jehlum prison.

The detentions were recommended unanimously by the District Intelligence Committee to avert sectarian conflict. During a meeting with police officials and complainants opposed to the Ahmadiyya Community, immense pressure was placed on the Ahmadi representatives to abstain from performing Qurbani. They were coerced into signing a surety bond to ensure no Ahmadi in the district would participate in the ritual. In response, Amnesty International called for the immediate release of the detainees and urged the Punjab government to protect the Ahmadiyya Community, particularly during Eid-ul-Adha, to allow them to practice their religion peacefully.

14 June, Daska Kalan

An Ahmadi man, Qaiser Imran, a resident of Daska Kalan in district Sialkot, purchased an animal for sacrifice and kept it inside his house, occasionally allowing his children to take it outside. An opponent of the community, residing in the same area, observed this and raised concerns. When advised to be cautious, Imran stated that the animal was intended for sale.

Subsequently, a complaint was submitted to the police, alleging that Imran had brought the animal for sacrificial purposes. The complainants demanded legal action against him. In response, the police confiscated the animal. Imran explained that the animal was for an aqeeqah ceremony, a religious practice to mark the birth of a child. However, the District Police Officer of Sialkot noted that aqeeqah is also an Islamic ritual, which did not mitigate the situation. Consequently, the Deputy Commissioner of Sialkot ordered Imran's detention for seven days, and he was relocated to Sialkot City.

17 June, Baghbanpura

On Eid-ul-Adha 2024, the Baghbanpura police in Punjab arrested Dr Tahir Ahmad, an Ahmadi doctor, allegedly for having a goat at his home. According to a statement by community spokesperson Amir Mahmood, Dr Ahmad was detained on 17 June, and at the time of writing his current whereabouts remain unknown. The arrest, purportedly for raising a goat in preparation for the Eid sacrifice, has caused significant distress to Dr Ahmad's family, who have been denied access to him since his detention.

17 June, Kotli, AJK

At approximately 2:45 a.m. a mob of around 150 people attacked the Ahmadiyya Mosque in Kotli, Azad Jammu and Kashmir (AJK). The assailants opened fire and subsequently destroyed the minarets and arch of the mosque. This attack, coinciding with the early hours of Eid, severely disrupted the community's Eid festivities. Prior to the incident, police forces were preoccupied with monitoring Ahmadi homes for sacrificial animals, neglecting their duty to protect the community from imminent threats, highlighting the prejudice and failure of law enforcement agencies to safeguard local Ahmadis.







This violence occurred despite a recent directive from the Ministry of Interior to all Inspector Generals of Police and Provincial Chief Secretaries, including those in AJK, to bolster security for Ahmadiyya buildings due to threats from the TLP. The Ministry's orders, issued two days prior to the attack, were evidently disregarded.

17 June, Faisalabad

Shehzad Ahmad received a portion of meat from a friend of his who had performed the ritual sacrifice of an animal. Sharing meat is a common practice during this Islamic festival.

Extremists associated with the TLP reported to the police that Ahmad, an Ahmadi, had violated the sanctity of Islam by being involved in the sacrificial process. Acting on this information, the police arrived at Ahmad's residence. They took both Ahmad and the meat from his refrigerator into custody. Subsequently, they transported Ahmad to the Sandal Bar police station in Faisalabad district.

Upon learning of the arrest, Ahmad's friend who had originally shared the meat, along with several other acquaintances, went to the police station. In total, around 40-50 individuals gathered at the police station to provide their statements in his defence. Additionally, the police officer on duty at the time of the incident also testified in his support. Subsequently, Ahmad was released from custody.

20 June, Gojra

An Ahmadi man from in Chak 312-JB, Khattowali, Gojra, was arrested under Section 298-C of the Pakistan Penal Code for "portraying himself as a Muslim and sacrificing a goat." The complaint was lodged by the TLPs district emir, Mohsin Raza Naqshbandi, who alleged that the act hurt the sentiments of Muslims and constituted an abuse of Islamic rituals. Following the complaint, police promptly arrested the individual and confiscated the goat meat, hide, and associated items.

"To deprive a non-Muslim (minority) of our country from holding his religious beliefs, to obstruct him from professing and practicing his religion within the four walls of his place of worship is against the grain of our democratic Constitution and repugnant to the spirit and character of our Islamic Republic,"

- Justice Syed Mansoor Ali Shah



The Rise of the Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan and Its Impact

The Tehreek-e-Labbaik Pakistan (TLP) has emerged as a significant force in Pakistani politics, wielding considerable influence over the country's religious and political landscape. Founded by Khadim Hussain Rizvi in 2015, the TLP's primary agenda is the strict enforcement of blasphemy laws and the protection of the finality of prophethood. This agenda has had profound implications for religious minorities in Pakistan, particularly the Ahmadiyya Community.

The TLP's rise to prominence has exacerbated the persecution of Ahmadis, especially during religious festivals such as Eid-ul-Adha. The party's rhetoric and actions have incited violence and discrimination against Ahmadis, preventing them from performing their religious rituals. For instance, during Eid-ul-Adha in 2020, TLP activists openly threatened Ahmadis, distributing pamphlets and making announcements in mosques urging people to prevent Ahmadis from carrying out the sacrificial rites.

In 2021, TLP's influence was evident when police, allegedly acting under pressure from TLP supporters, arrested several Ahmadis for attempting to perform the Eid sacrifice. These arrests were often accompanied by public harassment and violence, as TLP activists took to social media and other platforms to spread anti-Ahmadi sentiments. One widely circulated video showed TLP members forcefully entering an Ahmadi household in Rabwah, disrupting the sacrificial ritual, and assaulting the family members.

The impact of TLP's campaign against Ahmadis during Eid-ul-Adha is not limited to grassroots actions. It extends to political and legal arenas where the party has successfully lobbied for stricter enforcement of anti-Ahmadi laws. In 2022, TLP's influence was instrumental in the passing of local resolutions in several districts that explicitly prohibited Ahmadis from performing the Eid sacrifice, citing it as a violation of Islamic principles.

The TLP's role in perpetuating anti-Ahmadi violence and discrimination during Eid-ul-Adha underscores a broader trend of religious intolerance and the politicisation of faith in Pakistan. This phenomenon not only violates the fundamental rights of Ahmadis but also contributes to an environment of fear and insecurity for religious minorities across the country. The unchecked rise of the TLP and its impact on the Ahmadiyya Community highlight the urgent need for comprehensive measures to protect religious freedom and counter extremist ideologies in Pakistan.



Resolutions by Bar Associations

Bar associations across Pakistan have played a controversial role in the persecution of Ahmadis, particularly concerning their right to perform religious rituals during Eid-ul-Adha. Various bar associations have issued resolutions that explicitly target Ahmadis, reinforcing social and legal barriers against their religious practices. In 2019, the Lahore Bar Association passed a resolution condemning any attempts by Ahmadis to perform the Eid-ul-Adha sacrifice. The resolution called on the government to strictly enforce blasphemy laws and prevent Ahmadis from conducting sacrificial rites, arguing that such actions were a violation of Islamic law. This resolution set a precedent for other bar associations in Punjab and beyond, leading to a wave of similar declarations.

For example, the Faisalabad Bar Association issued a statement in 2020 demanding that local authorities take immediate action against any Ahmadi found performing the Eid sacrifice. The resolution was followed by increased surveillance and police action against Ahmadi households during the festival, resulting in several arrests and widespread intimidation.

In 2021, the Rawalpindi Bar Association escalated this campaign by threatening to take legal action against any government official who failed to prevent Ahmadis from performing the Eid sacrifice. This resolution, combined with the TLP's growing influence, led to heightened tensions and incidents of violence against Ahmadis during the festival.

In 2023, the Lahore High Court Bar Association (LHCBA) called on the provincial home department of the Punjab to dilligently implement law against the members of the Ahmadiyya Community if they were found to be performing the religious rites and rituals of Eid-ul-Adha.

In a letter, dated 22 June, LHCBA President Ishtiaq A Khan noted that offering the Eid prayer and the animal sacrifice were Islamic rituals that ought to be exclusively observed by Muslims.

He added that article 260(3) of the Constitution declared Ahmadis a non-Muslim minority in 1974, and therefore they could not undertake any form of Islamic practice.

This year the Lahore High Court Bar Association again issued letters to the Home Secretary, the Inspector General Police and all levels of the police authority (RPO, CCPO, CPO, DPO, DC and SHO's) in the district of Punjab to take "preemptive and preventive measures to bound and restrain illegal use of Shaair-e-Islami (Gathering for Eid Prayer and Qurbani etc) by Qadiani/Lahori Group (i.e. Ahmadi Muslims) on the occasion of Eid-ul-Adha..."



The role of bar associations in this context highlights the intersection of legal institutions and religious intolerance in Pakistan. By using their authority to pass resolutions against Ahmadis, these associations have contributed to the systematic marginalisation of the community. Their actions reflect a broader trend of using legal mechanisms to enforce religious orthodoxy, undermining the principles of justice and equality.

The involvement of bar associations in the persecution of Ahmadis during Eid-ul-Adha underscores the need for judicial and legal reforms in Pakistan. It is crucial to ensure that legal institutions uphold the rights of all citizens, irrespective of their religious beliefs, and do not become tools for propagating discrimination and intolerance.



Lahore High Court Bar Association Lahore

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Ref. No. L.H.C.Bar /- 2913

Dated: 05-06-2024

To,

THE REGIONAL POLICE OFFICER, GUJRAT REGION.

SUBJECT: ISSUANCE OF DIRECTION TO ALL DPOS ETC OF THE GUJRAT REGION TO IMPLEMENT THE EARLIER ISSUED NOTIFICATION NO.SO (IS-III)6-35/2023 DATED 23 JUNE 2023 FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF SECTION 298(C) PAKISTAN PENAL CODE.

RESPECTED SIR,

- 1. That on the occasion of Eid-Ul-Adha, 10th day of Zul-Hajj "Eid Prayer Congregation" and on 10th 11th 12th day of Zul-Hajj "Qurbani of certain animals" being a Sunnat-e-Ibrahimi (A.S) as well as Sunnat-e-Muhammad (sallallahu alihi wasallam) Khatam Un Nabiyeen is an important religious obligations and Shaair-E-Islami which only belongs to Muslims community i.e for more than 1400 years.
- That as per article 260(3) of the Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan, 1973, the Qadyani Group, Or Lahori Group (who called themselves "Ahmadi" or by any other names) they have been declared to be Non-Muslims Minority Since 07-09-1974. Consequently, the qadyanis were restrained to perform any SHAAIR-E-ISLAMI UNDER SECTION 298C OF PPC.
- 3. That the Qadyanis are declared <u>Non-Muslim Minority</u> (as per Constitution of Islamic Republic of Pakistan 1973) but they <u>portray themselves as Muslims by stealing the Identity of Muslims and demanded the Muslims rights</u>, that's why Supreme Court PLD 1993 SCMR 1718 said that they are fraudulent and unscrupulous Non-Muslims.
- 4. That on the occasion of Eid-Ul-Adha, performing "Qurbani" and "Performing Eid Prayer" Shaair-e-Islami are reserved only for Muslims but only qadyani/ mirzai infidels deliberately exercise the act of qurbani and eid prayers illegally on the occasion of Eid-Ul-Adha and directly or indirectly poses themselves as Muslims, or calls, or refers to, their faith as Islam and by visible representations, or in any manner falls within the ambit of 298C PPC.



Lahore High Court Bar Association Lahore

 That every year, on the occasion of Eid-UI-Adha, there are so many reports/FIRs on the record of concerned authorities, which show that Qadyani Group (non-Muslims), openly, flagrantly and high headedly violate the Section 298(C) PPC.

Under the circumstances you are humbly prayed that a direction may kindly be issued to the quarter concern to implement the Notification No.SO (IS-III)6-35/2023 Dated 23 June 2023 issued by your worthy office in true letter and spirit.

It is further prayed that a direction may kindly be issued to all DPOs etc. of Region to take all the necessary and requisite preemptive and preventive measures to bound & restrained illegal use of Shaair- E-Islami (Gathering For Eid Prayer And Qurbani Etc) by Qadiani / Lahori Group on the occasion of Eid-Ul-Adha, 10th, 11th, and 12th of Zul-Haii and otherwise take action in accordance with law.

It is further prayed that a clear direction by mentioning that in case of noncompliance strict/stern departmental action shall be initiated against the concerned officials and also legal action under 298C, of the PPC should be taken against the Qadiani non-Muslim group and other organizers of the Qadiani Jamaat so that the peace of the area can be maintained and any kind of loss of life and property can be avoided.

NOTE: - 1. NOTIFICATION NO.SO (IS-III)6-35/2023 INSTRUCTIONS FOR EID PRAYER
GATHERING Issued by Home Department of Government of Punjab Dated
23 June 2023 is attached.

2. Copies of Firs lodged on violation of Section 298(C) PPC are attached.

Thanking you in anticipation.

(MUHAMMAD ASAD MANZOOR BUTT)
Advocate Supreme Court
PRESIDENT
LAHORE HIGH COURT BAR ASSOCIATION,
LAHORE.

The Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance

The Punjab Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) Ordinance of 1960 is a legal framework that grants the provincial government of Punjab, Pakistan, the authority to detain individuals without trial for up to three months if their actions are considered a threat to public order. This ordinance aims to maintain public order and security by allowing preventive measures against potential disturbances.

During the Eid-ul-Adha festival in 2024, the MPO was extensively used against the Ahmadiyya Community, with 23 Ahmadis being detained pre-emptively. This marked a significant and concerning use of the ordinance on such a large scale against the community. The detentions were justified by authorities on the grounds of preventing public disorder, on the pretext of the anti-Ahmadi laws which prohibit Ahmadis from practicing Islamic rituals publicly or presenting themselves as Muslims. This widespread application of the MPO against members of the community sets numerous dangerous precedents.

The potential use and combination of anti-Ahmadi laws with the MPO ordinance create an environment where almost any aspect of Ahmadi life and religious practice can be construed as a provocation to the majority Muslim population. This could lead to further pre-emptive detentions and heightened persecution of Ahmadis, exacerbating societal tensions and posing severe human rights concerns. Such a legal approach underscores the urgent need for reforms to protect the rights and freedoms of religious minorities in Pakistan, ensuring they are not unjustly targeted under broad and potentially abusive legal provisions.







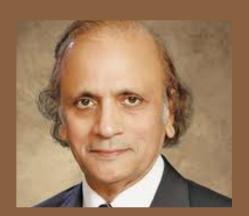


O/ Court Rulings and Legal Precedents

In a landmark judgment, Pakistani Supreme Court Justice Mansoor Ali Shah ruled that members of the Ahmadiyya Community have the right to practice their faith within the confines of their homes. This decision was part of a broader ruling emphasising the rights of religious minorities in Pakistan to private worship. However, the ruling specifically mentioned that while Ahmadis could practice their faith privately, they could not publicly identify as Muslims or perform Islamic rituals openly, due to existing constitutional restrictions and societal sensitivities.



More broadly, in 2014 Supreme Court Justice Tassaduq Hussain Jillani, gave a ruling that underscored the protection and promotion of minority rights in Pakistan, in response to a suo moto notice taken following a terrorist attack on a church in Peshawar in September 2013. In particular, the ruling highlighted that the state had an obligation to ensure that all citizens, regardless of their religious affiliation, could enjoy their right to freedom of belief and expression without fear of discrimination or persecution. The court stressed that this freedom was a cornerstone of a democratic society and must be safeguarded to promote religious harmony and tolerance.



Despite these judgements, the legal and administrative actions taken against Ahmadis during the 2024 Eid-ul-Adha festival starkly contravened both rulings. Local law enforcement authorities in Punjab, influenced by extremist groups, pre-emptively detained 23 Ahmadis under the Punjab Maintenance of Public Order Ordinance, among a total of 36 Ahmadis taken into custody overall. These actions are also indicative of systemic bias against Ahmadis within law enforcement, with police frequently acting against Ahmadis while ignoring legal protects.

Advocacy and Recommendations

To address these ongoing human rights violations, the following measures are recommended:

1

RAISE INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS:

Human rights organisations and international bodies should continue to highlight the plight of Ahmadis in Pakistan, particularly their inability to practice religious rituals and festivals freely.

2

LEGAL REFORMS:

Amend discriminatory laws, such as those targeting Ahmadis under the blasphemy laws, to prevent misuse and protect freedom of religion.

3

STRENGTHEN LEGAL PROTECTIONS:

Enforce existing laws that protect religious minorities and ensure that violations are met with appropriate legal consequences.

4

GOVERNMENT ACCOUNTABILITY:

Urge the Pakistani government to enforce Supreme Court and High Court rulings that protect private religious practices and hold law enforcement accountable for unlawful actions against Ahmadis.

5

STRICT ENFORCEMENT OF ANTI-HATE SPEECH LAWS:

Enforce existing laws against hate speech rigorously. Ensure that any speech or material that incites violence or discrimination against minorities is promptly addressed with legal action. Introduce new legislation if necessary to specifically criminalise hate speech against religious minorities, ensuring that the laws are clear and enforceable.

6

REVIEW MPO LAWS:

Conduct a comprehensive review of the Maintenance of Public Order (MPO) laws to ensure they are not misused to target religious minorities, in the arbitrary manner they were used against Ahmadis during the 2024 Eid-ul-Adha festivities.

7

JUDICIAL OVERSIGHT:

Establish a judicial oversight mechanism to review cases where MPO laws are invoked. Ensure that any application of these laws against religious minorities undergoes strict scrutiny to ascertain its necessity and fairness.

